Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission
Conseil de la radiodiffusion et des télécommunications canadiennes
Canada

News Release

July 11, 1995

CONSUMERS TO BENEFIT FROM CRTC SATELLITE HEARINGS

OTTAWA/HULL -- The CRTC today announced that applications for Direct-to-Home (DTH) satellite service must be submitted by August 25, 1995 (Public Notice CRTC 1995-114).

In continuing its longstanding efforts to broaden consumer TV choices, the CRTC is cutting its usual 90-day call for applications in half, fast-tracking it to 45 days. Then it will make its best efforts at subsequent stages to shorten the licensing time frame.

The Commission had strongly opposed the first draft of the Government's DTH directives mainly because of a retroactive clause it thought unfair to some Canadian entrepreneurs and because it believed the specificity of some points created a risk of political interference in broadcast regulation.

"Since this was the first use of these new powers of direction under the 1991 *Broadcasting Act*," said CRTC Chairman Keith Spicer, "it was probably inevitable that there be some difference of views on exactly how far the powers could go without undermining the non-political, transparent procedures of the independent regulator."

"We are pleased," he went on, "that the Government has amended its Directions, notably on retroactivity and on the level of contributions to Canadian programming. At our request, the Government has also clarified its policy on use of Canadian and foreign satellites."

"We have left on record some reservations about a few points we still think unduly limit our statutory discretion. But overall, we believe that our strong defence of non-political regulation, the supporting views of industry, and the Government's own flexibility have produced a workable compromise."

"In trying to meet, or come very close to meeting, the Government's November 1 deadline for issuing licences," said Mr. Spicer, "the Commission is on a bit of a tightrope. On the one hand, we sincerely want to respect the Government's wishes; on the other, this is not just a simple matter of dealing with two applicants having well-advanced plans. We expect to receive more than two applications for DTH satellite distribution, as well as separate applications for French and English satellite pay-per-view and digital audio radio services. As always, our timetable is affected by the number and range of applicants and by the questions they raise."

"Notwithstanding these real complications," said Mr. Spicer, "we are going to move with all deliberate speed, acutely mindful of the Government's wishes, but responsibly and fairly, as the *Broadcasting Act* demands."

"With this important procedural phase completed," said Mr. Spicer, "we can now all focus our efforts on what really matters: providing Canadians with interesting new TV choices, while generating fresh investment to ensure that many of the best choices are Canadian."

- 30 -

Contact: CRTC Public Affairs, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0N2
Tel: (819) 997-0313, TDD: (819) 994-0423, Fax: (819) 994-0218

Copies of today's notice are available through our Internet home page, http://www.crtc.gc.ca , or in the public examination room at any of the following CRTC offices:

City	Telephone	TDD	Fax
Halifax	(902) 426-7997	(902) 426-6997	(902) 426-2721
Montreal	(514) 283-6607	(514) 283-8316	(514) 283-3689
Ottawa/Hull	(819) 997-2429	(819) 994-0423	(819) 994-0218
Winnipeg	(204) 983-6306	(204) 983-8274	(204) 983-6317
Vancouver	(604) 666-2111	(604) 666-0778	(604) 666-8322

[français]